

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-13, 15-21 and 27-29 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 22-26, 31 and 32 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Support for the claims can be found throughout the specification, including the original claims and the drawings. Withdrawal of the rejections in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amended claims is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 since the amendments: (1) place the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); (2) do not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration (since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution without incorporating additional subject matter); (3) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; and/or (4) place the application in better form for appeal (if necessary). Entry is thus requested.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner is thanked for the indication that claims 1-13, 15-21 and 27-29 are allowed. As all of pending claims are in condition for allowance, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance.

II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Office Action rejects claims 22-26 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Japanese Patent No. 3-178792 (hereinafter "JP '792). Claims 22-26 and 31 have been cancelled, and thus this rejection is moot.

Serial No. **10/773,325**

Docket No. **MRE-0067**

Reply to Office Action of **January 7, 2009**

III. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

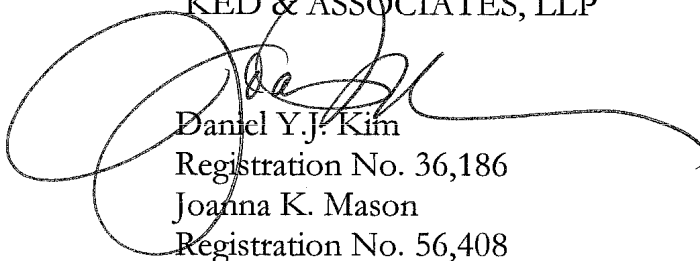
The Office Action rejects claim 32 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over JP '792 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,406,246 to Itoh et al. (hereinafter "Itoh"). Claim 32 has been cancelled, and thus this rejection is moot.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned, **Joanna K. Mason**, at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: February 11, 2009

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